

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL KRAKOW

AMCONSUL POZNAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PL

SUBJECT: KRAKOW GOVERNOR ON MEAT SHORTAGES

REF WARSAW 1418

THE FOLLOWING REPORT HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE KRAKOW
CONSULATE:

1. IN A CANDID INTERVIEW, KRAKOW WOJEWODA (GOVERNOR) WIT
DRAPICH CONFIDENTILY EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT THE MEAT
SITUATION WOULD BE CLEARED UP BY EASTER. THE WOJEWODA ALSO
EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT PRICES OF MOST CONSUMER ITEMS WOULD
REMAIN FROZEN UNTIL THE END OF 1975.

2. AT A CALL ARRANGED TO INTRODUCE NEW VICE CONSUL NICHOLS
ON MARCH 13, 1975, DRAPICH UNAMBIGUOUSLY EXPRESSED HIS
OPINION THAT THERE WOULD BE ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF MEAT FOR
THE UPCOMING EASTER HOLIDAYS. HE INTIMATED THAT QUANTITIES
OF MEAT HAD BEEN HELD OFF THE MARKET TO MEET THE
EXPECTED INCREASE IN DEMAND FOR EASTER.

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3. THE WOJEWODA ALSO STATED THAT HE BELIEVED NEITHER THAT

EXCESSIVE QUANTITIES OF MEAT WERE BEING EXPORTED NOR THAT ABNORMAL QUANTITIES OF MEAT WOULD HAVE TO BE IMPORTED TO COVER THE CURRENT MEAT SHORTAGE. INSTEAD, HE ATTRIBUTED THE CURRENT SITUATION TO: (A) A 14 PERCENT RISE IN MEAT CONSUMPTION BY THE POPULACE IN JANUARY, (B) AN "ABNORMALLY" LARGE NUMBER OF SCHOOL CHILDREN VISITING KRAKOW FROM SURROUNDING REGIONS DURING THE RECENT TWO-WEEK SCHOOL BREAK, AND (C) A LACK OF ATTRACTIVE CONSUMER ITEMS IN THE MIDDLE PRICE RANGES WHICH COULD EFFECTIVELY SOAK UP PURCHASING POWER. AS THE WOJEWODA POINTED OUT, "... IN FRANCE CONSUMERS COULD ALWAYS BUY PERFUME".

4. DRAPICH ALSO EXPRESSED HIS VIEW THAT PRICES OF MOST CONSUMER ITEMS -- AND PARTICULARLY FOOD -- WOULD REMAIN FROZEN THROUGH 1975. WHEN CONFRONTED BY A QUESTION AS TO WHO WOULD FOOT THE ULTIMATE BILL FOR CURRENT SUBSIDIES TO COVER THE GAP BETWEEN PROCUREMENT COSTS AND PRICES ON THE MARKET, THE WOJEWODA AGREED THAT ULTIMATELY THE CONSUMER WOULD PAY. THE DIFFERENCE, AS DRAPICH PUT IT, BETWEEN SOCIALIST AND CAPITALIST COUNTRIES WAS THE SHARE OF THE BURDEN TO BE BORNE BY THE CONSUMER AND THE SPEED WITH WHICH IT WOULD BE SHIFTED. HE AGREED THAT IN CAPITALIST COUNTRIES, PRICES CHANGE TO BRING ABOUT A RELATIVELY RAPID BALANCING OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND, BUT STATED THAT IN SOCIALIST COUNTRIES THESE CHANGES WERE HANDLED MORE OPTIMATLLY THROUGH PLANNING.

DAVIES

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